

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NASA/I/BGGARNER:SS

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NASA/SL/WJAKOBOWSKI

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NASA/ER/BTNOLAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA:OCLR

SUBJ: CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR NASA AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 263070

1. REFTTEL DESCRIBED FLIGHT NEAR U.S./MEXICAN BORDER OVER ARIZONA DUNE REGIONS IN CONNECTION WITH NASA VIKING MARS PROGRAM. SINCE MEXICAN OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE WAS DENIED FLIGHT LINE WAS SHORTENED AND TURNS WERE CONDUCTED SOLELY OVER U.S. TERRITORY.

2. WHILE DATA COLLECTED IN ABOVE NOVEMBER FLIGHTS HAS BEEN HELPFUL, THERE ARE SOME UNIQUE FORMATIONS ON MEXICAN SIDE OF BORDER WHICH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE BEST ANALOGIES OF THE MARS DUNE AREA. A STUDY OF THIS AREA COULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE VIKING MARS LANDINGS THIS SUMMER BY ENABLING A BETTER PREDICTION

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OF POSSIBLE LANDING HAZARDS.

3. NASA WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN SOME RADAR DATA JUST SOUTH OF THE BORDER OVER ROUGHLY TRIANGULAR AREA EAST OF 115 DEGREES LONGITUDE AND NORTH OF 32 DEGREES 35 MINUTES LATITUDE, PENETRATING MEXICAN AIR SPACE ABOUT 80 KM.

4. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR NASA IS DR. HAROLD MASURSKY OF USGS. HE HAS BEEN IN DISCUSSION WITH MR. ING. G. SALAS HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES MEXICO.

5. AIRCRAFT IS NASA OWNED CV-990 CALL NUMBER NASA 712.

6. INSTRUMENTATION TO BE USED DURING MISSION IS JPL MULTIBANK RADAR.

7. PLANNED FLIGHT ALTITUDE 7.6 KM.

8. AIRCRAFT WOULD STAGE FROM US AND MAKE ONE FLIGHT DURING WEEK OF MARCH 22 WEATHER DEPENDENT.

9. DATA AVAILABLE TO GOM UPON REQUEST. MASURSKY WILL SUPPLY COPIES TO SALAS.

10. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO OBTAIN NECESSARY FLIGHT CLEARANCE AND ADVISE.

11. PILOT WILL FILE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT PLANS.

12. FYI: MASURSKY INFORMED NASA THAT DENIAL OF LAST FLIGHT MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO GOM REQUEST FOR APOLLO 14 ASTRONAUT TRAINING REPORT WHICH THEY NEVER RECEIVED. NASA UNAWARE OF ANY REQUESTS FOR SUCH A REPORT. TRAINING WAS CONDUCTED IN PINACATE VOLCANIC FIELD, SONORA, MEXICO IN 1970. NO FORMAL REPORT EVER ISSUED. AT REQUEST OF MASURSKY BRIEF TWO PAGE MEMO WAS WRITTEN LAST SUMMER WHICH HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO EMBASSY FOR TRANSMITTAL TO GOM. END FYI.

13. FYI: WE ARE AWARE QUESTIONS MAY ARISE CONCERNING THE CHANGED REQUIREMENTS IN THE TWO RECENT FLIGHT REQUESTS. NASA SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL HAD HOPED TO OBTAIN RADAR
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COVERAGE OF DUNE REGIONS ON BOTH US AND MEXICAN SIDE OF BORDER. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF RECOGNIZED GOM SENSITIVITIES PAST PROBLEMS RE OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCES, THE SCIENTISTS WERE ASKED TO LIMIT RESEARCH TO FLIGHTS OVER US IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. THAT WAS RATIONALE FOR US COVERAGE ONLY IN NOVEMBER OVERFLIGHT REQUEST WITH NON-INSTRUMENTED TURNS OVER MEXICAN AIRSPACE. RESULTS FROM THOSE FLIGHTS WHICH

WERE CONDUCTED WHOLLY WITHIN US INDICATE THAT MEXICAN DATA
ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE USGS/NASA WITH BEST POSSIBLE UNDER-
STANDING OF ANALOGOUS REGIONS ON MARS AND MAKE BEST IN-
FORMED JUDGMENT ON JULY LANDING SITE FOR VIKING SPACECRAFT.

INFORMATION DESIRED FROM RADAR DATA THEREFORE OF UTMOST
IMPORTANCE IN OBTAINING FULL SCIENTIFIC VALUE FROM THIS
MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SPACE MISSION. END FYI.

14. POSTS MAY AT ITS DISCRETION EXPLAIN SERIES OF EVENTS
DESCRIBED ABOVE TO APPROPRIATE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES IF IN
POST JUDGMENT THIS WOULD ASSIST IN OBTAINING CLEARANCE. INGERSOLL

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